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U.S. JOINT TASK FORCES IN THE KOSOVO CONFLICT

By

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy

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For all their success, individually and collectively, the U.S. JTFs had significant flaws. It is through the identification and investigation of these flaws and providing corrective recommendations for future JTFs that we arrive at the real victory in Kosovo. Serbian forces didn't capitalize on our efficiencies; the next opponent will do better.

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Preface

It was a morning staff brief unremarkable from the hundred previous ones I had participated in as the U.S. Sixth Fleet Air/Strike Officer except, this was the first time I recall the situation in a small Serbian province -- Kosovo being briefed. It was February 1998, and in a region where Admiral Joe Lopez, then Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, declared, "the enemy is regional instability," Kosovo seemed pretty small potatoes. A local insurgent group, the Kosovo Liberation Army had clashed with Serbian police near a nameless village and three were killed. During the same briefing, the deteriorating situation in the North African country of Algeria was briefed. For the third consecutive day Islamic extremists hostile to the elected government had invaded a town overnight and massacred the entire population of over a thousand people. I took a note to myself to start reviewing applicable Non-Combatant Evacuation procedures as it was just a matter of time. This was not the first nor would it be the last time I, and others, would be wrong about Kosovo.

This paper is hopefully not a recounting of the 78-day tragedy that befell Kosovo, Serbia, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Volumes have been written about the 'war' and the presses are still turning. Rather, this paper will examine the contributions and shortcomings of the three U.S. combatant Joint Task Forces (JTFs) created by the Commander, U.S. European Command (EUCOM), General Wesley Clark, to support NATO and help resolve the Kosovo situation. The last of these, JTF Noble Anvil, was established in January 1999, and commanded by Admiral James Ellis. Its mission was to coordinate the military actions of U.S. assets, F-117, B-2 and TLAM, which current policy would not allow under NATO control. Admiral Ellis was uniquely positioned to accomplish this as he was also the NATO commander of Operation Allied Force, charged with conducting the military operations against Kosovo if necessary.

While the literature surrounding Allied Force continues to grow, relatively little has been written about the critical role of the U.S. JTFs or implications for future crisis situations. This paper is presented to hopefully better balance the informational scales. I gratefully acknowledge the efforts of Admiral Ellis and his Noble Anvil Headquarters staff to 'capture the essence' of Kosovo before the smoke cleared. Their unpublished reports helped focus my research efforts and any difference in the opinions or conclusions they drew are strictly mine.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Road to Kosovo

For 78 days in the spring of 1999, NATO conducted its first offensive military actions as an alliance against the ethnic cleansing campaign being conducted by the forces of Yugoslav President Milosevic against the Albanian majority in Serbia's Kosovo. This NATO effort was Operation Allied Force¹. Much has and continues to be written about NATO's first combat experience and its myriad of lessons learned. Rather than be accused of 'piling on', this paper will take a different tack and a far narrower approach. Using Kosovo as the backdrop, this research paper will examine the strengths, weakness and contributions to unity of effort of the three U.S. Joint Task Forces created by U.S. European Command (EUCOM) to support NATO's military effort in Kosovo and whether they are models for future JTF commands? JTF Flexible Anvil and JTF Sky Anvil formed in late 1998 played key roles in the initial preparations for combat. JTF Noble Anvil controlled all 'U.S. only' assets and synchronized U.S. and NATO actions. From their successful, and not so successful, efforts we will seek better ways to organize U.S. forces for the next conflict.

Where were you when you first became conscious of the place called Kosovo? For me it was February 1998, aboard the U.S. Sixth Fleet flagship, USS LASALLE, anchored in Gaeta, Italy. It was at the morning staff brief, no different from the many previous ones I had attended as the Fleet Air/Strike Officer. The briefing on Kosovo was minimal, involving a clash between the Kosovo Liberation Army and Serbian police leaving a small number killed. It paled in comparison to the reports coming out of Algeria that winter. Islamic extremists, hostile to the elected government, were stepping up their campaign of terror and for three consecutive days attacked villages overnight killing

upwards of a 1000 persons each night. My thoughts were focused on the various near term contingencies that might involve Algeria with no further immediate thought given to Kosovo. I was wrong, but I certainly not alone. Fortunately, there were other Kosovo watchers who more accurately forecast the events ahead:

*"The continued systematic oppression of the predominantly Albanian population in Kosova by the Yugoslav government could lead to more serious instabilities. If left unchecked, the oppression will surpass the use of tanks and troops, brute force, indiscriminate house arrests and torture employed by Yugoslav authorities to quell peaceful demonstrations in Kosova during the Spring of 1981; during that period thousands of ethnic Albanians were killed, wounded, imprisoned and buried secretly as Yugoslav authorities closed borders, declared martial law, expelled the international new media and continued the brutal roundup of Albanians. The lack of an appropriate response by Western governments has set the stage for an explosion in Kosova with unpredictable consequences. An in depth analysis of the KOSOVA situation clearly shows that the oppression of the Albanian people will end either (a) through the concerted action of the outside world aimed at pressuring Belgrade to grant the Albanians their republic or (b) by revolution."*²

In this statement more reminiscent of the situation in 1998 than when it was actually made in 1986, the U.S. intelligence community clearly articulated the dynamics at work within Kosovo and their eventual outcome. The unique nature of Kosovo is further highlighted by no less than then President George Bush. At the very time his administration was diplomatically attempting to remain clear of the growing unrest in Bosnia, President Bush on December 27th 1992 said, "In the event of conflict in Kosovo, caused by Serbian action, the United States will be prepared to employ military force against the Serbs in Kosovo and in Serbia proper"³.

When Army General Wesley Clark assumed command of EUCOM and the NATO position of Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) late in 1997, he brought with him a perspective on Milosevic few other American military leaders could have. As a member of the U.S. delegation to the Dayton Accord negotiations in 1995, General

Clark gained first hand experience with President Milosevic's methods for formulating and conducting policy.

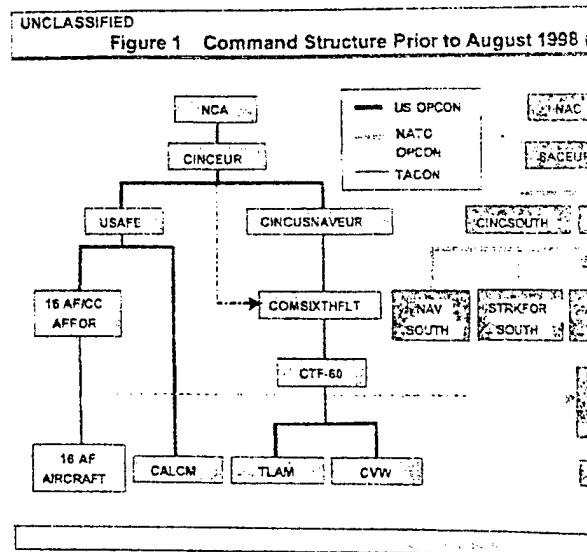
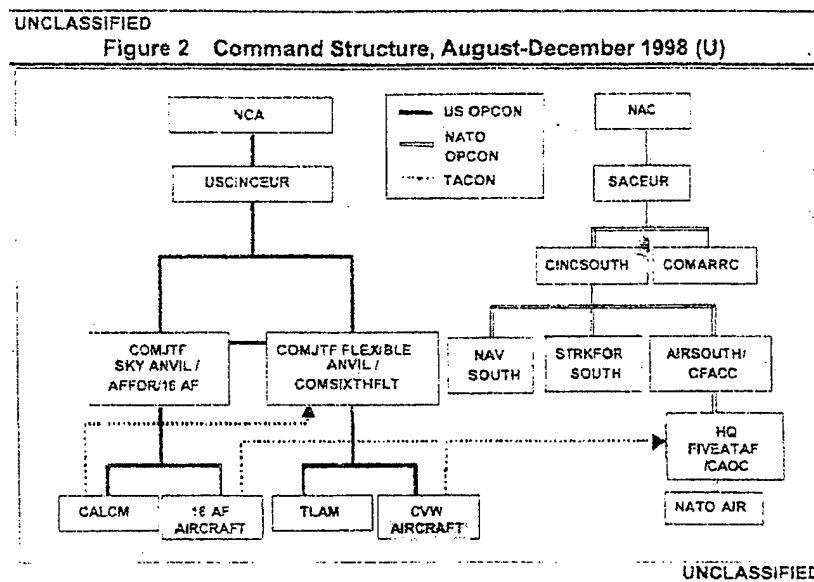


Figure 1 depicts the U.S. command structure in place when General Clark assumed command. This is the normal peacetime arrangement with separate U.S. and NATO command arrangements.⁴ In response to the growing violence in Kosovo during the summer of 1998, General Clark established two functional U.S. Joint Task Forces to conduct specific mission planning. These JTFs were composed of forces under his direct command, which could and did respond immediately. These were largely Joint Task Forces in name only, as both retained the makeup and character of the parent service. Creation of the JTFs did allow General Clark direct command of the planning capabilities resident in two strongly led U.S. commands. During this same period, efforts were initiated within NATO to commence military planning, but the North Atlantic Council was reluctant to move beyond planning for the insertion of peacekeepers if requested. Figure 2 shows the command and control structure during the period that Joint Task Force Flexible Anvil and Joint Task Force Sky Anvil were activated, between August and

December 1998. Under the new arrangement, the Commander in Chief, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, and Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe, were removed from the



chain of operational command. The Commanders, 16th Air Force, LtGen Mike Short, and Sixth Fleet, Vice Admiral Dan Murphy, became Joint Task Force commanders reporting directly to the EUCOM commander.⁵

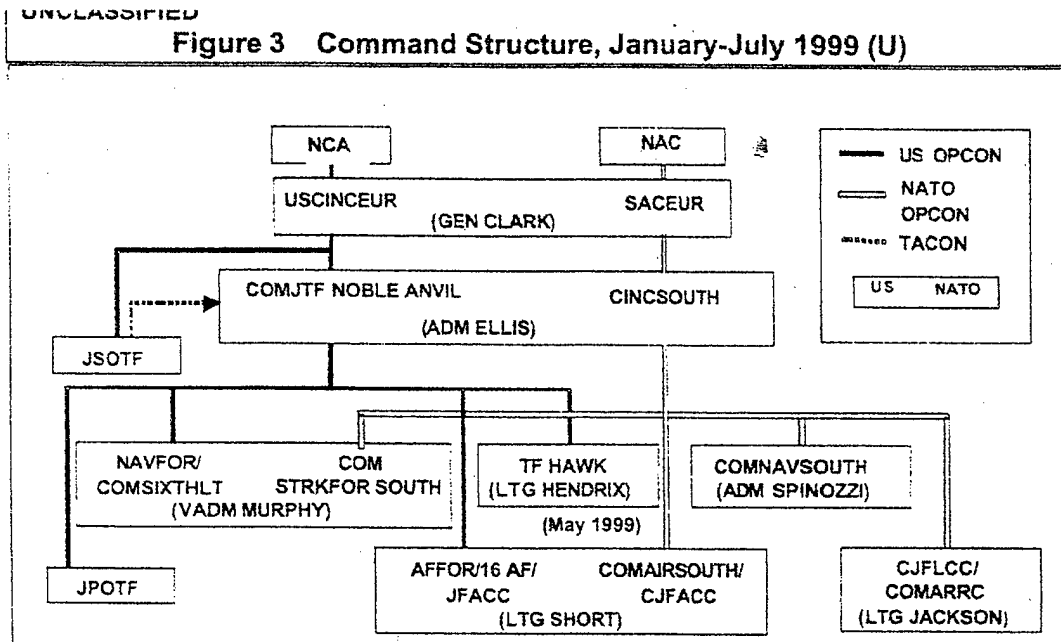
The principal role given Joint Task Force Flexible Anvil was to plan and be prepared to execute a limited strike option-using TLAM and CALCM missiles. JTF Sky Anvil's mission was to plan a more extensive strike option using fixed wing aircraft if the limited strike option failed to achieve the objective.⁶ Both the functional JTFs required little or no augmentation beyond their normal organizations to accomplish assigned tasking. Both JTFs benefited significantly, over planning forces in Desert Storm, from advances in communications technology, especially in accomplishing unity of effort. Access to technology such as secure Internet and distributive-planning tools allowed JTF planners to easily coordinate their efforts across all levels of command from local to national.

NATO officers were excluded from this first round of planning as the U.S. and NATO chains of command were still separated. The U.S.-only plans were completed and approved by the NCA prior to NATO's Activation Order on 13 October 1998. During the summer, NATO had slowly recognized the possible need to take military action to halt the Serbian operations in Kosovo. The U.S. plans, as formulated by the two functional JTFs, were available for NATO's use when directed.

The success of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke's negotiations with Milosevic, predicated largely on the coercive threat of a U.S. and NATO bombing attack, stayed the execution of the proposed plans. With OSCE observers on the ground in Kosovo, the exchange of Serbian and NATO military officer liaison teams, and the aerial verification mission, Operation Eagle Eye in place, JTFs Flexible Anvil and Sky Anvil were dissolved in December 1998.

As the situation in Kosovo deteriorated throughout the winter, NATO's political and military leadership struggled to find the correct response formula to address the worsening situation in Kosovo and yet retain the Alliance's cohesion. The critical issue was whether to plan a forcible entry ground option for Kosovo. The debate within NATO effectively slowed the entire NATO war planning effort. The inability of NATO to decide on a comprehensive course of action; and recognition that combat, if it came, would require additional air forces available only from the United States led General Clark in his U.S. command position to establish Joint Task Force Noble Anvil. JTF Noble Anvil, was commanded by Admiral James Ellis, who was also NATO's commander of Operation Allied Force. With one foot firmly in both NATO and the U.S. only command structures, Admiral Ellis was uniquely positioned to synchronize Alliance

and U.S. military operations and ensure unity of effort. Figure 3 illustrates the command structure established to support JTF Noble Anvil.



II. JTF Noble Anvil

Before the Beginning

The planning guidance afforded JTF Flexible Anvil and JTF Sky Anvil appears in large measure to be an example of mirror imaging back to the military actions used in 1995 to bring Milosevic and the Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table. Then, a few days of limited bombing sorties and a handful of TLAMs succeeded in convincing Milosevic that the cost of continued resistance was too great. In 1998, the NATO and U.S. logic mirror imaged that used in 1995. Accordingly, the plans developed by the U.S. JTFs flowed more from updating what had worked previously than from any independent and comprehensive analysis of how best to counter Milosevic's current military strategy. Additionally, with a few exceptions, the plans developed were well within the capabilities of assets routinely operating within the European Theater. Though prepared to act for NATO in the fall of 1998, diplomatic achievements would temporarily delay execution of the U.S. planned military actions.

Joint Task Force Noble Anvil, created in late January 1999, was the direct beneficiary of the prior planning conducted by the JTF Flexible Anvil and JTF Sky Anvil commanders. In the Noble Anvil command structure, the former JTF commanders became component commanders but more importantly, each came with its previous JTF planning organization in place and ready to operate. Figure 3 also depicts however what JTF Noble Anvil lacked, a Ground Component Commander. The hesitancy over planning a ground option, which had gripped NATO since the summer of 1998, had ultimately found support within the U.S. NCA. Without a Ground Component

Commander or adequate ground representation on the Noble Anvil staff, Admiral Ellis lacked the means to explore all the various military options for countering Milosevic's strategy.

What is a JTF?

This is an appropriate moment to consider the question: What is a Joint Task Force? Examining the applicable Joint Pubs provides a partial understanding. Joint Task Forces are created by the NCA, a combatant commander or another JTF commander. The JTF mission should meet the following criteria: a specific limited objective, not requiring centralized control of logistics, but requiring close integration of effort and requiring coordination of local defense of subordinate areas.⁷ JTF commander's duties include recommending the proper employment of assigned forces, accomplishing the assigned operational mission and jointly training assigned forces. A JTF's forces are those assigned by the establishing authority and come from two or more military departments in a significant scale.⁸ Unity of command and unity of effort are the overarching goals of the JTF commander. Joint Pub 3-0 provides additional insights on these goals.

*"JTF's should ensure that their joint operations are synchronized in time, space, and purpose with the actions of other military forces (multinational operations) and nonmilitary organizations.... Unity of command means that all forces operate under a single commander with the requisite authority to direct all forces employed in pursuit of a common purpose. Unity of effort, however, requires coordination and cooperation among all forces toward a commonly recognized objective, although they are not necessarily part of the same command structure. In multinational... operations, unity of command may not be possible, but the requirement for unity of effort become paramount. Unity of effort – coordination through cooperation and common interests – is an essential complement to unity of command."*⁹

For the military actions conducted throughout Operation Allied Force it appears Admiral Ellis was exceptionally successful in this regard. With respect to how forces are organized, Joint Pub 3-0 also states,

*"The manner in which JFCs [Joint Force Commanders] organize their forces directly affects the responsiveness and versatility of joint force operations. The first principle in joint force organization is that JFCs organize forces to accomplish the mission based on the JFCs vision and concept of operations. Unity of effort, centralized planning and decentralized execution are key considerations."*¹⁰

Here the success of JTF Noble Anvil is less certain. With Noble Anvil's establishment in January 1999, it became responsible for execution of an air operation whose planning had been completed in late 1998, by a now defunct organization. Though JTF Sky Anvil no longer existed, the personnel responsible for creating the Kosovo air plan were now part of the Noble Anvil Air Component. With its late establishment, it is unclear exactly how much the JTF Noble Anvil staff was involved, if any, in the mission definition and course of action planning they were responsible for executing. The original mission and the mirror imaging method to accomplish it appear to have been established during the summer of 1998 by EUROM, with execution detail provided by the former JTFs Flexible Anvil and Sky Anvil. This idea is further confirmed by the absence of a Ground Component Commander within the JTF Noble Anvil command structure. Air power was the answer; any ground force option was to be excluded.

Was Noble Anvil the 'Right' Tool?

By any reasonable measures of success, JTF Noble Anvil was the correct 'implement' for the United States to use to oversee its military actions during Operation Allied Force.¹¹ Though it can be argued that the mission and means were products exclusively of General Clark and the EUROM staff, this argument fails to recognize the "division of labor" equation General Clark needed to resolve. The political aspects of Allied Force and NATO cohesion were paramount and demanded his constant attention. The military

aspects of Allied Force, though critical to success, were, with the exception of ground forces, well defined by NATO. Accordingly, the military execution of Operation Allied Force and its U.S. only portion, JTF Noble Anvil, could be entrusted to a key subordinate -- Admiral Ellis.

As discussed previously, JTF Noble Anvil, successfully synchronized its efforts with the rest of the NATO alliance. All military objectives identified within the Allied Force plan were achieved. From his position as both the NATO Allied Force commander, and the commander of U.S. JTF Noble Anvil, Admiral Ellis was able to optimize the integration of the numerous forces assigned to him. Admiral Ellis and his subordinate U.S./NATO commanders, such as LtGen Short were superbly positioned to provide not only the prowess of American instruments of war, but also the more significant commodity -- U.S. leadership. Taken together these two elements were major contributors to further ensuring a degree of unity of effort.

The efforts of JTF Noble Anvil resulted in numerous operational "firsts" in support of Operation Allied Force. Among these firsts were B-2 bomber missions flown from the United States armed with the Global Positioning System (GPS) guided Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM); Strike Land Attack Missiles (SLAM) fired by the Navy's long endurance maritime patrol P-3 aircraft; and the United Kingdom's launch of 21 TLAM from the submarine HMS SPLINDID.¹² Additionally, available to Noble Anvil for the first time was the global lift capability of the C-17, and the numerous distributive planning tools which redefined the capabilities of the military's worldwide secure communications system. An example of this was the collateral damage predictive modeling done for every sensitive target by the Joint Warfare Analysis Center located in

the United States. Perhaps more amazing though is that Noble Anvil and Allied Force were accomplished with little or no disruption to the normal flow of operations within the rest of the European Theater.

The most significant contribution by JTF Noble Anvil was the air operation conducted by LtGen Short in his NATO and U.S. fighting hats.¹³ I consciously chose not to call it an Air Campaign for, as Joint Pub 3-0 reminds us, conducting campaigns is the purview of joint forces and not components.¹⁴ Regardless of what we call it, the air operation was highly effective and superbly executed even though politically constrained.¹⁵ Allied Force instead of being an example of joint and combined arms integration, combining all the elements of military power available to the coalition, became instead a single dimensional vision of victory – air power only.¹⁶ Air power is an effective ‘arrow in the quiver’, but it should be only one of many arrows which the JTF can apply. When applied correctly, as it was late in the conflict against Serb forces massing against a resurgent KLA, it can have significant impact.¹⁷

JTF Activation in a Crisis

JTF Noble Anvil reaffirmed a long known lesson within the U.S. military – creation of a JTF in the midst of a crisis is not optimal. Admiral Ellis did not have a pre-designated or theater trained staff to use as the nucleus of his JTF. The U.S. officers on his NATO staff were fully occupied with planning and executing Allied Force. For the initial core of JTF Noble Anvil Admiral Ellis used the forces most available to him-- U.S. Naval Forces Europe staff personnel located in London. This ad hoc group, more an administrative than operational staff, were pressed into service, and without adequate training did a respectable job until help in the form of more than 300 reserve augmentees

could arrive.¹⁸ In my assessment there were three reasons for the late activation of JTF Noble Anvil. The first two have been previously discussed, they were: first, that major coalition operations required decisive and senior U.S. leadership and second that Admiral Ellis as the NATO commander of Allied Forces Southern Europe was uniquely positioned to synchronize U.S. and Alliance operations. The third reason has also been alluded to previously. In a classic example of script writing, U.S. planners expected the Kosovo conflict to be a rerun of the short operation waged against the Bosnian Serbs in 1995.

Consequently, the OPLAN developed was single dimensional and scoped for a short duration conflict. Working from these faulty assumptions, U.S. planners concentrated exclusively on the available air options and ignored the other elements of national and allied power or the possibility of needing branches and sequels. Through the multilateral declarations that ground forces would not be employed, NATO and the U.S. surrendered the opportunity to incorporate Deception, or Information Operation options into the OPLAN. Given such a myopic approach to initial planning it is not surprising that the only sequel available to the U.S. and NATO as bombing failed to gain a quick victory was to propose more bombing.¹⁹

Political Constraints

Political constraints affected every aspect of planning and execution in response to the Kosovo crisis.²⁰ From the very beginning in the summer of 1998, General Clark was compelled to proceed incrementally in planning for military operations in Kosovo.²¹ Both NATO and U.S. political leaders became intimately involved in the target selection and approval process.²² NATO approached its first combat experience very deliberately.

Consensus and cohesion of the alliance members were more important than any target or even the timely halting of the genocide being conducted within Kosovo. Two key political decisions however stand out from the rest. First, the decision to expend the necessary effort and resources to ensure that collateral damage was minimized --more on this in a moment. Second, the decision to rule out any form of ground option. This lack of an initial credible ground threat to Serbian forces is credited, by some, with prolonging the conflict.²³ The ultimate deployment of Task Force Hawk, the 24 Apache attack helicopters, to Albania has been cited as Milosevic's worst nightmare, because it finally established the vestige of a ground threat on the Kosovo border. Not everyone agrees however on the value of the helicopter deployment. As one veteran of Vietnam who works as a consultant for the Army lamented, "You ask for 24 helicopters and they give you 5,200 guys", complaining about the two months it took to deploy and prepare TF Hawk for combat.²⁴ On balance though, TF Hawk afforded Noble Anvil one of its few opportunities to pursue a legitimate psychological and/or deception operation and by its presence gave Milosevic one additional factor to consider.

Military Constraints -- Collateral Damage

Both a military and a political constraint, the debate over collateral damage and the lengths to which JTF Noble Anvil, and correspondingly NATO, went to avoid it, frame the Kosovo conflict like no other issue. NATO and the U.S. bore no ill will towards the Serbian people. Accordingly, there was serious consternation within NATO over the idea of bombs raining down on a European capital and its citizens. The enemy was Milosevic, his government and the fielded forces in Kosovo not the Serbian people. To mitigate the threat to the general Serbian populace from alliance bombing operations, Noble Anvil

and the U.S. intelligence community introduced an expanded process of target collateral damage assessment that has been termed the 'New American Way of War.' Capitalizing on advances in communications, collaborative planning and precision weapons, U.S. targeteers were able to accurately forecast the effects of individual weapons against specific targets. The degree of accuracy, which can be achieved by this process, is currently resident only in the U.S. military. Allied reliance upon precision guided weapons, and their effects, are yet to reach the advanced levels demanded of the United States. The United States' ability to assess the potential for collateral damage at a particular target has created the public expectation that targets can be reliably destroyed without causing unnecessary death or destruction. Every incident of collateral damage was considered a failure to be investigated and explained in detail. Rather than describing a new American way of war, this excessive concern over enemy collateral damage could perhaps better be described as a self-inflicted asymmetric wound.

Shaping the Battlefield – Pluses and Minuses

Because of the abrupt and abbreviated manner in which JTF Noble Anvil was established and manned it was not always completely successful in accomplishing those critical activities which help shape the battlefield. The highly specialized field of Information Operations was not fully exploited. If it had been, the length of the campaign might have been halved. Psychological operations had the potential to be a force multiplier but required the use and trust of subject matter experts from outside the theater.

Public information and Public affairs were underutilized elements of national power in the Kosovo conflict.²⁵ In many regards the enemy was better and faster than we were.

Hopefully, we have successfully moved beyond service parochialism to the point where Public Information and Public Affairs can be rightfully appreciated and integrated as elements of our national combat power.

JTF Noble Anvil wrestled with the power of Information Technology throughout the conflict. Like a two-headed monster from mythology, Information Technology (IT) has the potential for great evil, but with the proper controls it can be a critical tool for success. IT must be closely monitored to ensure that information overload does not consume the user and lengthen the decision process. Two technologies, new to the Kosovo conflict, are illustrative of this: Secret Internet Protocol Routing Network (SIPRNET) and Video Teleconferencing (VTC).²⁶

SIPRNET is the U.S. only classified Internet that provides all the speed, clarity and ease of access found in the normal worldwide Internet. For the first time in a significant operation, planners were able to instantly communicate regardless of location. Email and on line chat put theater planners in contact, and in sync, with national intelligence and planning capabilities. Conversely, as Navy Vice Admiral Dan Murphy, the Noble Anvil Maritime Component Commander and a major proponent of IT cautions, "with the connectivity of the tactical Internet comes a need for doctrinal discipline." He further notes that, "...in many cases orders were passed through e-mail without the usual formal signatures required, leaving it up to the common sense of field commanders to discern what was actually a lawful order and what was merely a suggestion." Admiral Murphy concludes, "...that the use of the Internet has led to a historic first in American warfare: there are no written records of the Kosovo conflict."²⁷

Video teleconferencing was another technology that left its mark on JTF Noble Anvil and its ability to coordinate a wide spread military operation. Used properly, VTCs can be a dramatic and powerful tool. Widely dispersed commanders can communicate face-to-face real time. Subordinate commanders can get clear force direction without having to personally visit with the JTF commander.²⁸ VTCs can drastically shorten previous decision cycles. However, if used improperly, VTCs can live up to their other name – Very Time Consuming. VTCs provide great clarity for those present but should not become substitutes for written force orders. The potential exists for confusion as verbal orders are relayed down to subordinate staffs who didn't see the VTC.²⁹

One of Noble Anvil greatest challenges and most notable successes was the coordination of critical Low Density / High Demand assets. Aircraft such as the EA-6B, JSTARS, UAVs and ISR platforms were vital to the daily mission success of Noble Anvil and Allied Force. While the performance of these systems was admirable, the impact in platform life, reliability, parts, personnel retention and replacements will continue to be felt for years. These are not the U.S. military's 'glamour' machines, and when not at war they are largely ignored - until the next conflict. These assets are always under funded, yet they are the first assets a JTF commander requires when engaging in conflict, they cannot continue to be ignored.

III. Conclusions and Recommendations

Future European JTFs - Overview

The ad hoc nature of the establishment of JTF Noble Anvil must not be the model for future U.S. JTFs. EUCOM and its subordinate commanders need to conduct a critical review of the lessons learned from the Noble Anvil experience and invest in the training, personnel and resources, required to develop the legitimate core of a combat capable JTF. Key personnel must be identified to man critical JTF functions. Necessary JTF hardware must be obtained and routinely upgraded to ensure readiness, and lastly, the hardware and personnel must regularly train together to ensure that when needed operators are not looking for the on/off switches. Augmentees will continue to play an important role in future JTFs and establishment of a specific augmentee database to track both personnel and their training would be beneficial. EUCOM should examine the Pacific Theater's Deployable JTF Augmentation Cell concept to assess if a similar program would benefit the European Theater. Seamless communications and information transfer interoperability between staffs, components, and allies are needed so everyone benefits from the ongoing informational Revolution in Military Affairs.

Future JTFs should adhere to organizational constructs provided in Joint Pubs and include all component commanders, even if initial planning indicates they are not all required. The absence of a Joint Forces Land Component Commander (JFLCC) with Noble Anvil was a mistake. Even without a ground offensive to prosecute, a ground component commander would have been useful to coordinate the deployment of Task Force Hawk and other ground-related activities. In the absence of a JFLCC, the Navy heavy Noble Anvil staff did the land planning.

Increased reliance on precision guided munitions have made Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) guided weapons a "must have" for U.S. and allied forces. Current stockpiles and future weapons investments must be changed to reflect this new reality.

JTF Noble Anvil failed to appreciate the power and potential of Public Information and Public Affairs. Accordingly, Noble Anvil ceded the information initiative in this key area of national power to Milosevic's forces and never recovered it. Future JTFs must better understand the integration of all elements of national power, and recognize that to ignore one is invite additional risk.

Although JTF Noble Anvil and its NATO allies conducted 78 days of sustained operations without a single combat related fatality, there were numerous self-inflicted asymmetric 'wounds' that must be fixed prior to the next requirement for a JTF.

Summation and Recommendations

It would be a fitting finale if the JTF Noble Anvil experience left some new heretofore undiscovered insights into the composition and conduct of a combatant JTF; -- unfortunately this is not the case. What JTF Noble Anvil does showcase however is that professional U.S. military personnel, from all the branches, through hard work, perseverance and superior leadership, can overcome nearly any obstacle, including lack of training and experience, and ultimately achieve their objective. That Noble Anvil in concert with Allied Force conducted 78 days of combat operations, ultimately establishing the conditions which required Milosevic to say 'Uncle' is the key lesson to take away from the Kosovo conflict. There are however several recommendations to improve future JTF organizations.

I have identified six recommendations for improving the organization and mission execution of future Joint Task Forces. Several of these are not new ideas, but rather more closely resemble enduring principles we unfortunately have to frequently relearn. First, a Joint Task Force commander and staff must become involved in the mission planning process as soon as possible. While this ideal may not always be militarily or politically achievable, creation of at least one standardize “JTF in a box” within each geographical theater would identify those essential staff members necessary to ensure a JTF is immediately ready to operate. Second, a JTF commander should never say never to a legitimate course of action. While a valid course of action may be ‘temporarily’ deemed militarily or politically untenable it should always be available as a branch if needed and should never be publicly rejected; nor should it cause a JTF commander to organize without the advice of all potentially involved component commanders. JTF Noble Anvil needed a JFLCC from the outset, and without it they often didn’t know what they didn’t know. While a JTF commander may not always know what they want until they need it, with a full complement of component commanders in place they will at least have the expertise available when required. Third, a JTF should conduct its own mission planning, independent of any previous planning, to ensure they have examined how best to employ all elements of national power towards mission accomplishment. This need not take a great deal of time, and can draw upon previous planning, but is essential to establishing JTF “ownership” of the plan they are executing. The single dimension air operation executed by Noble Anvil did not address the strategic situation on the ground in Kosovo; and largely overlooked the possible benefits from integrating Information Operations, PSYOPS, Public Information, Public Affairs and other element of alliance power into a

multifaceted plan. Fourth, the JTF staff must recognize the power of Information Technology and organize such that they harness the benefits it can provide. Failure to do this can allow IT to overwhelm the users and become a voracious time consumer instead of the tool needed. Fifth, JTF staffs must be more sensitive to the unique capabilities and limitations of Low Density / High Demand assets. Regardless of parent service, LD/HD are national assets requiring early and constant visibility in the planning and execution of combat operations. Sixth and final recommendation is a reminder that the 21st century battlefield has not yet achieved transparency, there remains plenty of Clausewitz's "fog and friction of war." JTFs must be mindful not to unilaterally hinder the ability to decisively impose its will on the enemy through a succession of self-inflicted asymmetric cuts. Serbian forces didn't capitalize on our inefficiencies; the next opponent will do better.

IV. Notes and Bibliography

Notes

¹ Department of Defense. "Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report" Report to Congress, 31 January 2000, pg. 3-4. "From the onset of operations, the United States and its NATO allies had three primary interests:

1. Ensuring the stability of Eastern Europe. Kosovo violence threatened peace throughout the Balkans and therefore all of Southeastern Europe
2. Thwarting ethnic cleansing.
3. Ensure NATO's credibility. Had NATO not responded to Milosevic's defiance and his campaign of ethnic cleansing, its credibility would have been called into question.

² U.S. Congress. House, Committee on International Relations, 10 February 1999, In testimony by the Honorable James A. Traicant, Jr, he cites unclassified 1986 U.S. intelligence report.

³ U.S. Congress. House, Committee on International Relations, 10 March 1999, In testimony by Jeane Kirkpatrick she makes reference to President Bush's famous Christmas Warning to Serbia.

⁴ Department of Defense. "Kosovo After-Action Report", pg 17. The U.S. Commander in Chief, Europe operating under the NCA, had operational control of his service components, U.S. Air Forces, Europe and U.S. Naval Forces Europe. The Commander USAFE exercised operational control of both 16th Air Force and B-52s when based in theater along with their conventional air-launch cruise missiles (CALCMs). Commander Sixth Fleet, had operational control of U.S. naval assets in theater and directed strike planning and execution for Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAM)

⁵ Ibid., pg 18

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Armed Forces Staff College Pub 1, "Joint Staff Officer Planning Guidance 1997" 1997, pg 2-31

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Joint Pub 3-0, "Doctrine for Joint Operations", 1 February 1995, pg A-2

¹⁰ Ibid. pg II-10

¹¹ Department of Defense, "Citation for Joint Meritorious Unit Award to Headquarters, Joint Task Force Noble Anvil, 14 October 1999. "[JTF Noble Anvil] provided critical command and control to over 42,000 U.S. Service personnel...directed the launch of over 38,000 combat and support air sorties and the launch of over 230 missiles."

¹² Michael E. O'Hanlon, "Implications for Future U.S. Forces of Operation Allied Force: Is the Force Mix Right?", Brookings Institute, The New York Times, 1999.

¹³ Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile War in Kosovo", Center for Strategic and International Studies, rev 20 July 1999.

¹⁴ Joint Pub 3-0, pg II-4, "To achieve assigned objectives, joint forces conduct campaigns and major operations. Functional and service components of the joint force conduct subordinate and supporting operations, not independent campaigns."

¹⁵ Frontline: PBS News Program, "How the War was Fought", Interview with LtGen Michael Short, "There were targets that individual nations would not let us hit. There were targets that individual nations would not allow us to hit with airplanes launched from their soil. Or, there were targets that individual nations would not hit themselves, but it was okay for somebody else to hit."

¹⁶ . O'Hanlon, "Implications for Future U.S. Forces of Operation Allied Force: Is the Force Mix Right?" "Western leaders, still giddy from Desert Storm, and Desert Fox, overestimated the effectiveness of airpower. Kosovo is not Iraq, and there are several crucial factors that they have ignored Terrain and weather are two prime examples."

¹⁷ Michael E O'Hanlon, Defense News, July 5, 1999, Forty percent of Serbia's armor losses were suffered in the last week of NATO's 11 week war; 80 percent were suffered in the 2.5 weeks, beginning around May 25....It was precisely in the last week in May when the KLA reached a size and capability great enough to begin its ground offensives in Kosovo."

¹⁸ Department of Defense. "Kosovo After-Action Report" pg 111. "To achieve the manning levels required to support operations in Kosovo, nearly 1000 individual augmentees were requested. Of these, the European Command accounted for 439 (45%), JTF Noble Anvil for 326 (34%) and JTF Shining Hope for 202 (21%)."

¹⁹ Alain Pellerin. "Fallout from the Air and Missile Offensive Against Yugoslavia", Conference of Defense Associations, "Air campaigns alone don't win wars - no branch when he [Milosevic] didn't give up except to apply more of the same."

²⁰ Frontline, Interview with Gen Wesley Clark, "...from the outset, we were trying to structure a military campaign that met the political requirements and we were trying to structure political requirements in the broadest possible fashions to meet the military needs of the campaigns."

²¹ Richard J. Newman, "Vietnam's Forgotten Lessons", U.S. News & World Report, May 1, 2000. "We walked into incrementalism [in Kosovo] because of NATO's experience in the past, and there was no way to move them off that as a starting point. Did we want to get into this in an incremental way? Absolutely not. But, it was incrementalism or don't go."

²² Stuart E. Johnson. "After Kosovo: Insight into Future Operations Correlation of Forces," RAND Corp. "National Command Authorities will take interest in the details of the military operation - in every conflict there is a measure of complaint from the military commanders about constraints put on the execution of the operation."

²³ Ibid. "...eschewing their [ground forces] in advance was probably a tactical mistake and may have prolonged Milosevic's resistance.

²⁴Newman.

²⁵ "A View from the Top," (unpublished draft briefing prepared by JTF Noble Anvil), June 1999

²⁶ Daniel Murphy, Defense Daily, 18 October 1999. Vice Admiral Murphy, the Sixth Fleet Commander, comments "...connectivity through the DoD's secure internet protocol - SIPRNET - coupled with video teleconferencing is the wave of the future....use of these systems...precluded the need to collocate commanders and left no room for ambiguity in target selection and attack."

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Department of Defense, "Kosovo Afteraction Report", "Video teleconferencing allowed for horizontal and vertical sharing of information and enhanced situational awareness, permitting senior leaders throughout the command chain an unprecedented visibility into, and the real time ability to exert influence..."

²⁹ "View From the Top"

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